

We know we need to see what these bills are going to look like. We are hearing that the majority wants to bring forward this tax-and-spend spree of legislation that would be trillions of dollars, and we know that what would end up happening is this would be something that—I call it lie, cheat, steal. You don't say exactly what you are going to use the money for. You don't say exactly where the money is going to come from within the budget. Eventually, all of it comes out of the taxpayers' pocket. And you are stealing hopes and dreams from future generations who are going to—they are going to have to pay the bill for this. It is our children and our grandchildren and future generations that are going to have to find a way to pay for all of this.

That is why I brought this chart back to the floor. I have used it recently here on this floor to remind us of Ronald Reagan's words:

Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction. It has to be fought for and defended by each generation.

Very true words. And what a good reminder to us because as we give government more control over our lives, as we give them more control in the Federal budget, as the government takes more money out of the pocket of hard-working taxpayers, what do we see? We see less freedom.

There is such concern that the Democratic majority has refused to come forward and say how they want to spend these trillions of dollars. I think part of that is because there is not a way to pay for it, and they don't plan to pay for it. Instead, they are going to send that bill to future generations.

This is dangerous. We are upside down on this national debt when you look at how that debt clock is ticking. But we have to choose to spend taxpayer money where it matters, and it still matters. It matters to Tennesseans what their tax dollars are spent for, and it matters how they are spent. Another thing that matters to them is what we are spending it for and the driving of inflation across this country.

If my Democratic colleagues continue to dig this hole, future generations will be in so deep that it will be very difficult for them to compete on the global stage. They will be vulnerable to the deathtraps our adversaries in Beijing set for nations that have made the same mistakes that the Democratic majority wants us to make: spending more money than you have to spend for programs that you cannot afford.

I would argue that existing in a state of dependence and vulnerability created by our own government is the opposite of freedom. It is the opposite of freedom. Is that really what we want for our children and grandchildren, to leave them with so much Federal debt that they are covered in debt; that most of their paycheck is going to go to the Federal Government to pay for

programs that have long outlived their usefulness? I think not.

That is why it is so important that we look at what is happening right now, as there are these conversations about budgets and as there are these conversations about the tax-and-spend spree that my colleagues across the aisle would seek to propose.

I would also offer that that type of spending is not governing. What it is, is a power grab. What it is, is taking care of your friends and not those who elected you to serve. The American people can see what is coming at them from a mile away, and they are expressing their concerns about DC's out-of-control tax-and-spend spree.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

VOTE ON WILCOX NOMINATION

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Madam President, with the permission of both sides, may I ask unanimous consent that the vote scheduled to start in 3 minutes start now?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Wilcox nomination?

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. BALDWIN). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

Mr. THUNE. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS).

The result was announced—yeas 52, nays 47, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 282 Ex.]

YEAS—52

Baldwin	Hickenlooper	Reed
Bennet	Hirono	Rosen
Blumenthal	Kaine	Sanders
Booker	Kelly	Schatz
Brown	King	Schumer
Cantwell	Klobuchar	Shaheen
Cardin	Leahy	Sinema
Carper	Lujan	Smith
Casey	Manchin	Stabenow
Collins	Markley	Tester
Coons	Menendez	Van Hollen
Cortez Masto	Merkley	Warner
Duckworth	Murkowski	Warnock
Durbin	Murphy	Warren
Feinstein	Murray	Whitehouse
Gillibrand	Ossoff	Wyden
Hassan	Padilla	
Heinrich	Peters	

NAYS—47

Barrasso	Blunt	Braun
Blackburn	Boozman	Burr

Capito	Hoeven	Romney
Cassidy	Hyde-Smith	Rubio
Cornyn	Inhofe	Sasse
Cotton	Johnson	Scott (FL)
Cramer	Kennedy	Scott (SC)
Crapo	Lankford	Shelby
Cruz	Lee	Sullivan
Daines	Lummis	Thune
Ernst	Marshall	Tillis
Fischer	McConnell	Toomey
Graham	Moran	Tuberville
Grassley	Paul	Wicker
Hagerty	Portman	Young
Hawley	Risch	

NOT VOTING—1

Rounds

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table, and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 258, David M. Prouty, of Maryland, to be a Member of the National Labor Relations Board for the term of five years expiring August 27, 2026.

Charles E. Schumer, Tammy Baldwin, Tim Kaine, Patty Murray, Tina Smith, Jacky Rosen, Christopher Murphy, Cory A. Booker, Mark R. Warner, Brian Schatz, Sherrod Brown, Sheldon Whitehouse, Raphael Warnock, Michael F. Bennet, Jeanne Shaheen, Patrick J. Leahy, Richard J. Durbin.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of David M. Prouty, of Maryland, to be a Member of the National Labor Relations Board for the term of five years expiring August 27, 2026, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS).

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 53, nays 46, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 283 Ex.]

YEAS—53

Baldwin	Durbin	Manchin
Bennet	Feinstein	Markley
Blumenthal	Gillibrand	Menendez
Booker	Hassan	Merkley
Brown	Heinrich	Murkowski
Cantwell	Hickenlooper	Murphy
Cardin	Hirono	Murray
Carper	Kaine	Ossoff
Casey	Kelly	Padilla
Collins	King	Peters
Coons	Klobuchar	Reed
Cortez Masto	Leahy	Rosen
Duckworth	Lujan	Sanders

Schatz	Stabenow	Warnock
Schumer	Sullivan	Warren
Shaheen	Tester	Whitehouse
Sinema	Van Hollen	Wyden
Smith	Warner	

NAYS—46

Barrasso	Graham	Portman
Blackburn	Grassley	Risch
Blunt	Hagerty	Romney
Boozman	Hawley	Rubio
Braun	Hoeven	Sasse
Burr	Hyde-Smith	Scott (FL)
Capito	Inhofe	Scott (SC)
Cassidy	Johnson	Shelby
Cornyn	Kennedy	Thune
Cotton	Lankford	Tillis
Cramer	Lee	Toomey
Crapo	Lummis	Tuberville
Cruz	Marshall	Wicker
Daines	McConnell	Young
Ernst	Moran	
Fischer	Paul	

NOT VOTING—1

Rounds

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HICKENLOOPER). On this vote, the yeas are 53, the nays are 46.

The motion is agreed to.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of David M. Prouty, of Maryland, to be a Member of the National Labor Relations Board for the term of five years expiring August 27, 2026.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

EGYPT

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, rightfully, this body is consumed with pending votes on infrastructure, but I want to draw my colleagues' attention to another matter of both importance and urgency.

One of Vladimir Putin's favorite tactics during the Chechen rebellion was to kidnap the innocent relatives of rebel leaders and hold them captive until the leaders surrendered. Sometimes, if the rebel leader never gave himself up, the family members would just disappear forever. Thousands of these cases were documented over the course of the war, all in gross, blatant violation of human rights laws. It is one of the many reasons that Russia is an adversary, not an ally of the United States. We don't do business with nations that prey upon the innocent. We don't align ourselves with nations that use kidnapping or torture as a tool to stay in power.

A few months ago, Moustafa Soltan and Khairi Soltan were startled by a hard knock on their door in the wee hours of a February Sunday morning. It was the Egyptian authorities, there to detain them again simply because their cousin happened to be a man named Mohamed Soltan, an American citizen and vocal Egyptian human rights advocate. Rightly, Moustafa and Khairi were not surprised because for the past year, the Soltan family has been the subject of consistent, coordinated harassment and detention by the agents of Egyptian dictator Abdelfattah Elsis. Now, Sisi would probably argue that he uses the tactic of harassing and detaining family members of his political opponents in a more judicious manner than does Vladimir Putin, but he can't deny that he does it. He further cannot deny the systematic method by which he has used the judicial system in Egypt to eliminate his political opposition.

Now, a reliable estimate is hard to come by because the political arrests have come at a dizzying pace since 2013, but it is believed that there are 60,000 people in jail today in Egypt because they are political opponents of the Sisi government.

Now, Putin jails his political adversaries, too, but his number of around 400 doesn't come close to Sisi's. But that is just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to the Egyptian regime's treatment of political opponents. Only China and Iran execute more people every year than Egypt, and many of these executions are for political crimes. Journalists are currently under constant threat in Egypt. The country rates 166 out of 180 by the press freedom group Reporters Without Borders compared against other nations.

In the 2018 Presidential election, Sisi had his main opponent arrested and had his campaign manager beaten up, causing all the other credible candidates to drop out of the race. Shockingly, Sisi won with 97 percent of the vote. That same year, Putin was less greedy. He gave himself only 70 percent in his Presidential election.

So why, you might ask, is Egypt our partner and Russia our adversary if their behavior is so malignantly similar? Why does Russia get sanctioned and Egypt get showered with \$1.3 billion in military aid each year?

Now, yes, there are important lines of cooperation between Egypt and the United States, and this explains some of that difference. Egypt's 1979 peace treaty with Israel remains one of the most significant diplomatic achievements for the promotion of Arab-Israeli peace. For the last 40 years, Egypt has been a peace broker between the Israelis and the Palestinians. We rely on them historically. Egypt contributed forces to the first gulf war in 1990. The United States and Egypt often cooperate on counterterrorism work. Our ships often get preference in going through the Suez Canal, although we pay for that privilege.

All that is important, but none of it is enough to justify the damage done to U.S. power and prestige when the whole world watches America deliver this giant blank check each year to Egypt while Sisi engages in this repeated, brazen violation of human rights. How do you tell Russia and China to stop their campaigns of political repression when we so openly endorse the grandiose scale of Sisi's?

No, Egypt has come to believe that it can act any way that it wants, that it can carry out a massive campaign of political repression and that the Con-

gress and the American President, whether he be a Republican or a Democrat, will just keep the money coming. And it is a stunning amount of money. The \$1.3 billion security assistance package that Egypt gets every year from U.S. taxpayers is bested by only one other country in the world, and that is Israel.

Most outrageous of all in light of this policy, Egypt arrests and imprisons American citizens with near impunity. Mohamed Soltan is not the only Egyptian American to be arrested and tortured as a political prisoner. Mustafa Kassem from Long Island, NY, was arrested in 2013 while visiting family, just visiting family in Cairo. He died in an Egyptian prison in January of last year. There have been dozens of other American citizens.

It is unacceptable that we would be providing over \$1 billion in assistance to Egypt while they are holding a single American in prison for political crimes. When countries accept our money and continue to thumb their noses at our values, it makes America look like a patsy. It makes us weaker as a nation.

So many of us cheered when President Biden took office declaring that there would now be "a foreign policy that unites our democratic values with our diplomatic leadership, and one that is centered on the defense of democracy and the protection of human rights." President Biden's team has been outspoken on human rights in our foreign policy by calling out abusive dictatorships who imprison their critics and muzzle free speech, reuniting our democratic allies in Europe against Russian election interference and Chinese misinformation, and sanctioning corrupt oligarchs all over the world. That is great news.

The Biden administration has chosen to make democracy and human rights a priority because they see this coming fight between Chinese- and Russian-modeled autocracy and American-led democracy. And over the last 4 years, Donald Trump's affection for dictatorship, it gave our adversaries in the autocratic world a headstart. President Biden knows the future of the world depends on our willingness as a nation to take a strong, immediate stand right now for democracy everywhere.

And so let's be clear. An administration that wants to lead on democracy and human rights cannot send another \$1.3 billion to Egypt with no strings attached. To do so would be to endorse Sisi's crackdown and send a bright, blinking message to the world that America talks a big game on democracy but isn't willing to do much about it.

Luckily, Joe Biden doesn't have to take the heat when it comes to a change in Egypt policy. He can simply blame Congress and tell Sisi that he is just upholding the law.

Why?

For more than a decade, Congress has been conditioning some of the aid we